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Central Intelligence Bulletin

State Department review completed

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22 September 1973

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Approved For Release 2004/01/20 : CIA-RDP79T00975A025300050002-4

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C O N T E N T S

ITALY - MIDDLE EAST: Italy warns EC partners that continued stalemate in Middle East harms Europe's vital interests.

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ITALY - MIDDLE EAST: THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO CONVINCE ITS EC PARTNERS THAT THE COMMUNITY MUST FOCUS ITS ATTENTION ON THE DANGERS THE CONTINUING MIDDLE EAST STALEMATE POSES TO EUROPE'S VITAL INTERESTS.

IN A STATEMENT TO THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS AT THEIR MEETING IN COPENHAGEN ON 10 AND 11 SEPTEMBER, FOREIGN MINISTER MORO EMPHASIZED THAT THE "NO WAR, NO PEACE" SITUATION PRESENTS A PARTICULAR THREAT TO EUROPE AND THAT THE EC SHOULD URGE THE US TO USE ITS INFLUENCE TO GET TALKS UNDER WAY BETWEEN THE ARABS AND THE ISRAELIS. HE CONTENDED THAT EUROPE WOULD BE THE FIRST TO SUFFER IF OIL POLICY BECAME TIED TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE. MORO TOOK NO COMFORT FROM THE GENERALLY CAUTIOUS POSITION OF MOST ARAB PRODUCING COUNTRIES IN THE PAST, REASONING THAT PERPETUATION OF THE STALEMATE WOULD GRADUALLY FORCE ARAB MODERATES TO GIVE MORE WEIGHT TO EXTREMIST VIEWS.

MORO REGARDS CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION BY THE US AS THE KEY TO BREAKING THE IMPASSE AND WELCOMES RECENT US STATEMENTS ACCORDING HIGH PRIORITY TO A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. IN COMMENTING ON MORO'S STATEMENT, HOWEVER, FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES EXPLAINED TO US EMBASSY OFFICIALS THAT MORO IS TRYING TO PROD THE EC PARTNERS INTO "NEEDLING" THE US TO MAKE A MOVE. THE ITALIANS FEEL THAT A CONTINUED STALEMATE COULD LEAD TO SERIOUS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE US AND THE EC ON THIS ISSUE.

ROME HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY ACTIVE ON THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION OVER THE PAST YEAR, BUT ITS CONCERN HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY RECENT EVENTS WHICH THREATEN TO INVOLVE ITALY MORE DIRECTLY IN THE MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE. FOR EXAMPLE, ROME IS CAUGHT IN A SQUEEZE BETWEEN ALLIED AND LIBYAN PRESSURES GENERATED BY QADHAFI'S RECENT EXPROPRIATIONS. LIBYA HAS REQUESTED ITALIAN ASSISTANCE IN OPERATING EXPROPRIATED FACILITIES IF THE COMPANIES DECIDE TO ABANDON THEIR FIELDS. ALTHOUGH THE ITALIANS DO NOT RELISH INVOLVEMENT WITH LIBYA, THEIR SUBSTANTIAL RELIANCE ON LIBYAN CRUDE MAKES THEM VULNERABLE TO PRESSURE.

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22 Sep 73

Central Intelligence Bulletin

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25X1

Next 9 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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